
CAPITOL CONNECTION

A Weekly Update of News and Views
For Opinion Shapers and Policy Makers
Congressman Gary G. Miller
42nd District, California



June 20, 2008

House Passes Troop Funding and Expansion of Veterans Benefits

After months of delay, the House on Thursday finally passed a responsible troop funding bill to meet the needs of our men and women in uniform. The measure funds ongoing combat operations in the War on Terror while providing for the most dramatic expansion of the GI Bill in more than two decades. In addition, the measure provides much-needed disaster relief for flooding in the Midwest and a thirteen week extension of unemployment benefits for those struggling in this uncertain economic time. Congressman Miller was proud to support this measure when it came to the House floor because it funds our troops serving in harm's way without unnecessary restrictions on our military leaders, ensures that our brave warriors have the education benefits they so rightly deserve, and works to help Americans hit hardest by flooding and uncertain economic times.

House Approves Intelligence Reforms

This week, the House passed compromise legislation to modernize the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), the 1978 law that governs when and how American intelligence agencies can intercept foreign communications. Under the measure approved by the House, the government would be required to submit its surveillance procedures to the FISA court before any surveillance could begin with an exception made for pressing national emergencies. Under those circumstances, surveillance could begin without a court order and last for no more than a week. On the question of whether telecommunications companies are legally liable for cooperating with the government following September 11th, the measure would require a district court judge to determine whether or not these firms acted properly and within the law. Congressman Miller supported the bill when it came to the House floor because he believes it strikes a necessary balance between individual liberties and national security. As the bill heads to the Senate where it is expected to be considered shortly, he will continue to support efforts to intercept terrorist communications in a manner that respects the civil liberties of American citizens.

Congressman Miller Cosponsors Bill to Open New Domestic Refineries

To reduce the cost of gasoline, Congressman Miller this week cosponsored legislation that would streamline the application process to bring new oil refineries on line. The bill, the Expand American Refining Capacity Act, would also require the President to open at least three closed military installations for the purpose of establishing new and reliable American refineries. Currently, it has been more than thirty years since a new refinery was constructed in the United States. In addition, Congressman Miller pledged along with more than 160 of his Republican colleagues to vote to increase U.S. oil production in order to lower gas prices for Americans. While our energy infrastructure is currently plagued by unnecessary restrictions on drilling and an insufficient refining capacity, Congressman Miller believes it is critical that Congress act immediately to reduce the price at the pump by increasing domestic supplies of energy and refining capacity. With the price of gas in California rapidly heading toward five dollars a gallon, hardworking American families and small businesses simply cannot wait any longer.

Reception to Honor Military Academy Appointees

On Saturday, June 21, Congressman Miller will host a reception to honor fifteen district high school and college students selected to attend a Military Academy this year. Attending the *U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY* will be Jonathan Hoey of Diamond Bar and Liberty McEntee of Yorba Linda. Leaving for the *U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD* will be Alexander Roman of La Habra, Devin Dugard, and Rebecca Lowe, both of Rancho Santa Margarita. Enrolling at the *U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO* will be Kellan Bateman of Chino, Jaclyn First of Mission Viejo, Jennifer Flynn of Trabuco Canyon, Jonathan Han of Mission Viejo, Timothy Lu of Yorba Linda, Jack Waller IV of Dove Canyon, Jacob Harrison of Mission Viejo, Ryan Weldon of Chino Hills, and Benjamin Chavez of Yorba Linda. Attending the *U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, NY* will be Connor Daly of Anaheim. Congressman Miller extends his congratulations to these bright and dedicated young individuals for answering their country's call to service.